

his treacherous designs against Constantine and the other Emperors.

Lactantius himself denies this supposition bluntly (*Sed id falsum fuit*) and then goes on to say \* that Maximian's real motive was to get rid both of Maxentius and the rest, and restore Diocletian and himself to power. Even for Lactantius, this is an extraordinarily wild theory. It runs counter to all that we know of Diocletian's wishes during his retirement, and it speaks of the "extinction of Maxentius and the rest" as though it only needed an order to a centurion and the deed was done. It is much more probable that Maximian had actually re-entered into negotiations with Maxentius and had offered, as the price of reconciliation, the support of the legions which he had treacherously won from Constantine. The impetuous haste with which Constantine flew back from the Rhine indicates that the crisis was one of extreme gravity.

Maximian did not long survive his degradation. That he died a violent death is certain ; the circumstances attending it are in doubt. Lactantius gives a minute narrative which would carry greater conviction if the details had not been so manifestly borrowed from the chronicles of the East. He says that Maximian, tiring of his humiliating position, engaged in new plots against Constantine, and tempted Fausta, his daughter, to betray her husband by the promise of a worthier spouse. Her part in the conspiracy was to secure the removal </

\* *Nunc id propositi habebat^ ut et Jilium et ceteris extinctis se ac Diocletianum restitueret in regnum.*